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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/220,920	12/24/1998	JEFFREY D. MILBRANDT	6029-7996	5436

7590 07/09/2003

KIMBERLY H. LU
THOMPSON CORBURN
ONE US BANK PLAZA
ST. LOUIS, MO 63101

EXAMINER

MURPHY, JOSEPH F

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

1646

DATE MAILED: 07/09/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/220,920	MILBRANDT ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Joseph F Murphy	1646	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 December 2002.

2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 11,12,15-24,26,27,39 and 40 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) 11 is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) 24 and 27 is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 12,15,16,19,20,23, 26 and 39 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) 17,18,21,22 and 40 is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11) The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) approved b) disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a) All b) Some * c) None of:

- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
- Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
- Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)	4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____
2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)	5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____	6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Formal Matters

Claim 25 was cancelled, and claims 12 and 15 were amended in paper No. 27, 12/2/2002. it is noted that in Paper No. 27, 12/2/2002, claim 12 was presented as being five times amended. In fact, claim 12 is six times amended. Claims 11-12, 15-24, 26-27, 39-40 are pending. Claim 11 stands withdrawn from consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b). Claims 12, 15-24, 26-27, 39-40 are under consideration.

Response to Amendment

Applicant's amendment and arguments filed 12/2/2002 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive, for the reasons set forth below.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112 first paragraph

The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, because the specification, while being enabling for a nucleic acid encoding an amino acid of SEQ ID NO: 26, does not reasonably provide enablement for a nucleic acid encoding an artemin amino acid sequence which is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26. The specification does not enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the invention commensurate in scope with these claims.

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 39 are overly broad since insufficient guidance is provided as to which of the myriad of variant nucleic acids encode polypeptides which will

retain the characteristics of Artemin. The artemin amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 26 is 220 amino acids long, while the claimed polynucleotide need encode an polypeptide which is 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26. Applicants do not disclose any actual or prophetic examples on expected performance parameters of any of the possible muteins of Artemin. It is known in the art that even single amino acid changes or differences in the amino acid sequence of a protein can have dramatic effects on the protein's function. It is also known in the art that a single amino acid change in a protein's sequence can drastically affect the structure of the protein and the architecture of an entire cell. For example, Voet et al. (1990) teaches that a single Glu to Val substitution in the beta subunit of hemoglobin causes the hemoglobin molecules to associate with one another in such a manner that, in homozygous individuals, erythrocytes are altered from their normal discoid shape and assume the sickle shape characteristic of sickle-cell anemia, causing hemolytic anemia and blood flow blockages (pages 126-128, section 6-3A and page 230, column 2, first paragraph).

Since the claims encompass nucleic acids encoding variant polypeptides and given the art recognized unpredictability of the effect of mutations on protein function, it would require undue experimentation to make and use the claimed invention. See *In re Wands*, 858 F.2d at 737, 8 USPQ2d at 1404. The test of enablement is not whether any experimentation is necessary, but whether, if experimentation is necessary, it is undue. The factors considered to be relevant in the instant case are set forth below:

(1) the breadth of the claims - The claims are drawn to a nucleic acid encoding an artemin amino acid sequence which is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26.

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(2) the nature of the invention - The instant invention is a nucleic acid encoding an artemin amino acid sequence which is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26.

(3) the state of the prior art - The Voet reference demonstrates that even single amino acid changes or differences in the amino acid sequence of a protein can have dramatic effects on the protein's function.

(5) the level of predictability in the art - The Voet reference demonstrates the unpredictability of the protein art. In the instant case there are a large number of nucleic acids which encode polypeptides which are 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26, however, these are unrelated proteins. The specification does not disclose the critical residues necessary to maintain function. The specification does not disclose the correlation between the structure (sequence) of the polypeptides and the function of promoting survival of neurons. The amino acid sequence of a polypeptide determines its structural and functional properties, and predictability of which amino acids can be substituted is extremely complex and well outside the realm of routine experimentation, because accurate predictions of a polypeptide's structure from mere sequence data are limited. Since detailed information regarding the structural and functional requirements of the peptides are lacking, it is unpredictable as to which encoding variations, if any, meet the limitations of the claims.

(6) the amount of direction provided by the inventor - Applicant has only taught a nucleic acid sequence encoding SEQ ID NO: 26. The Specification does not provide sufficient guidance to make nucleic acids encoding proteins at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26 which promote survival of neurons, the Specification also does not teach how to use the nucleic acids which encode unrelated proteins which do not promote survival of neurons.

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(7) the existence of working examples - Working examples are not provided for a nucleic acid encoding an artemin amino acid sequence which is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26.

(8) the quantity of experimentation needed to make or use the invention based on the content of the disclosure. Given the breadth of claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 39 in light of the predictability of the art as determined by the number of working examples, the level of skill of the artisan, and the guidance provided in the instant specification and the prior art of record, it would require undue experimentation for one of ordinary skill in the art to make and use the claimed invention.

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 26 and 39 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventor(s), at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. Applicant is directed to the Guidelines for the Examination of Patent Applications Under the 35 U.S.C. 112, ¶ 1 "Written Description" Requirement, Federal Register, Vol. 66, No. 4, pages 1099-1111, Friday January 5, 2001.

These are genus claims. The claims are drawn to a nucleic acid encoding an artemin amino acid sequence which is at least 88% identical to SEQ ID NO: 26. The written description requirement for a claimed genus may be satisfied through sufficient description of a

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representative number of species by actual reduction to practice, reduction to drawings, or by disclosure of relevant identifying characteristics, i.e. structure or other physical and/or chemical properties, by functional characteristics coupled with a known or disclosed correlation between structure and function structure, or by a combination of such identifying characteristics, sufficient to show the applicant was in possession of the claimed genus. In the instant case, the specification fails to provide sufficient descriptive information, such as definitive structural or functional features of the claimed genus of polynucleotides. There is no description of the conserved regions which are critical to the structure and function of the genus claimed. There is no description of the sites at which variability may be tolerated and there is no information regarding the relation of structure to function. Furthermore, the prior art does not provide compensatory structural or correlative teachings sufficient to enable one of skill to isolate and identify the polynucleotides encompassed: there is no guidance in the art as to what the defining characteristics of the encoded polypeptides might be. Thus, no identifying characteristics or properties of the instant polynucleotides are provided such that one of skill would be able to predictably identify the encompassed molecules as being identical to those instantly claimed.

Since the disclosure fails to describe the common attributes or characteristics that identify members of the genus, and because the genus is highly variant, a nucleic acid encoding the polypeptide of SEQ ID NO: 26 is insufficient to describe the genus. One of skill in the art would reasonably conclude that the disclosure fails to provide a representative number of species to describe the genus. Thus, applicant was not in possession of the claimed genus.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112 second paragraph

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 23 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 23 recites the limitation "said artemin amino acid" in line5. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

Conclusion

Claims 17, 18, 21, 22, 40 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Claims 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 26, 39 are rejected.

Claims 24, 27 are allowable.

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Advisory Information

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Joseph F. Murphy whose telephone number is 703-305-7245. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 7:30-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Yvonne Eyler can be reached on 703-308-6564. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are 703-305-3014 for regular communications and 703-308-0294 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-308-0196.


Joseph F. Murphy, Ph. D.
Patent Examiner
Art Unit 1646
February 20, 2003


YVONNE EYLER, PH.D
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER
TECHNOLOGY CENTER 1600